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ABSTRACT

This study surveyed the academic needs of international students at Dominican University of California and compared the reported needs of these students with those of the larger population of international students. Of the 55 surveys distributed, 38 were returned. Survey results show that a large percentage of international students attending Dominican University of California were able to understand class lectures and written materials and could finish their work in a timely manner. More challenging to international students were writing essays and speaking in the classroom. A large percentage of students reported that they did not use campus resources at the university fully. Language proficiency was positively related to cultural adaptation, social integration, and academic progress. Social integration and cultural adaptation directly and positively correlated to academic success. The difficulties reported by international students at Dominican University were similar to those reported by international students at colleges and universities throughout the United States. It can thus be assumed that the components of successful international programs used at other institutions of higher learning will be applicable and useful at Dominican. From this data, a staff development module will be developed. The survey is attached. (Contains 29 references.) (SLD)

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Title Page

Meeting the Needs of International Students at Dominican University of California

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May 2003

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Abstract

International students attending universities in the United States encounter academic, cultural, social, personal, and environmental difficulties, many of which stem from insufficient mastery of the English language. The purpose of this study was to survey the academic needs of international students at Dominican University of California and compare the reported needs of these students with those of the larger population of international students.

Of the 55 surveys distributed, 38 were returned. Survey results showed that a large percentage of international students attending Dominican University of California were able to understand class lectures and written materials and could finish their work in a timely manner. More challenging to international students were writing essays and speaking in the classroom.

A large percentage of students reported that they did not utilization of campus resources at the university. Language proficiency was positively related to cultural adaptation, social integration, and academic progress. Social integration and cultural adaptation directly and positively correlated to academic success. The difficulties that were reported by international students at Dominican University of California were similar to those reported by international students at colleges and universities throughout the United States. It can thus be assumed that the components of successful international programs used at other institutions of higher learning will be applicable and useful at Dominican. From this data, a staff development model for faculty in-service will be developed in the near future.

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Introduction

Statement of Problem

According to Schoorman (2000), people in the United States lack global awareness. This lack of awareness is problematic in light of our country's growing need to acknowledge our international interdependence, global technological interconnections, increasing global trade, and the call to participate in the resolution of global problems. Therefore, in order to be successful in international relationships people in the United States need to create a global partnership with foreign countries. The internationalization of higher education in the United States is an important aspect of this global partnership.

Dominican University of California (DUC) recognizes the need to internationalize its campus and has done much to realize this goal. Toward this end, the university strives to recognize the needs of this population. There are many academic, social/cultural, personal/psychological and environmental challenges faced by international students on the Dominican campus. The Dominican University community wants international students to be successful in their courses of study, thereby becoming ambassadors of knowledge and prosperity. Through these efforts, DUC also hopes to attract an increasing number of international students to the campus.

Purpose Statement

The needs of international students have been widely researched. The purpose of this study is to identify the needs of international students on this

campus, and ascertain the degree of similarity between Dominican students and international students across the United States. From this data, the plan is to create a staff development model for faculty in-service in this area. The focus of this research addresses the academic needs of this population and to acknowledge the cultural, emotional, personal, and environmental needs as they relate to academic success.

Hypotheses

If in general the needs of international students are similar throughout the United States, then the needs of international students at DUC are similar to the larger population. Therefore, the ways in which other universities have addressed these needs may be useful as a basis for faculty education on this campus.

Conceptual Explanation

It can be assumed that DUC wants to attract international students, who will be successful in demonstrating academic competence to earn a diploma. It is assumed that the university community wants to foster intercultural communication and understanding for international students, for American students, and for all faculty and staff.

Literature Review

In 1958, President Dwight D. Eisenhower said, "The exchange of students…should be vastly expanded. Information and education are powerful forces in support of peace. Just as war begins in the minds of men, so does peace." (NAFSA, 2002, p. 2) Nineteen years later, President Jimmy Carter

echoed this same sentiment when he said, "Only by knowing and understanding each other's experiences can we find common ground on which we can examine and resolve our differences...As the world becomes more and more interdependent, such mutual understanding becomes increasingly vital." (NAFSA, 2002, p. 1)

Four reasons have been given in support of the need for the internationalization of higher education: world peace; success in international competition; global knowledge; and global cooperation. Two concerns underlie these four rationales: the international interdependence of the United States, and the lack of global awareness among its citizens. An educational institution's goals for internationalization are rooted in needs brought about by global technological interconnections, global trade, and the resolution of global problems such as pollution, hunger, disease, and terrorism (Schoorman, 2000).

A great asset to any country's efforts to internationalize its educational system is the utilization of its international students. Many international educators agree that international students are an important part of the effort (ibid.). The presence of these students on campuses allows opportunities for cultural and international understanding. International students, while here to achieve their own personal and academic goals, are always cultural ambassadors (Sandhu & Asrabadi, 1994). They can assume many roles, serving as educational resources in classroom discussion, counselors for study abroad, guest speakers on cultural topics, and organizers of cross-cultural events (Schoorman, 2000).

During the 2000-2001 academic year, 547,867 international students studied in the United States. This accounts for approximately 3.8 percent of total enrollment in U.S. colleges and universities with these students contributing almost $11.04 billion to the U.S. economy. The United States remains the leading destination for international students; however, there is growing competition from European countries aggressively courting these students. In 2000-2001, the top ten countries of origin listed in order were China, India, Japan, Republic of Korea, Taiwan, Canada, Indonesia, Thailand, Turkey, and Mexico (NAFSA, 2002).

More than half of the international students who studied in America last year were from Asia. About 180,000 were from East Asia, with a third coming from China, representing the largest number of students from one country within a three year period. Approximately 72,000 international students came from Central Asia, primarily India, which sent 54,664 students last year. This was a 29 percent increase from the preceding year. Nearly 7,000 students came from Pakistan. Only 75 students were from Afghanistan, where the number of students studying in America has diminished over the last ten years (Manzo, 2001). In the United States, California and New York led the nation in numbers of international students with 74,281 and 58,286 respectively. Texas was third with 37,735 students. Seventy-five percent of all international students between 2000 and 2001 were either self-sponsored or fully funded by overseas sources (NAFSA, 2002).

Approximately 46 percent of international students studying in the United States are undergraduates, 42 percent are graduates, and 5 percent are receiving practical training. The various fields of study of foreign students is as follows:

Field of Study	Percent of International Students
Business	2
Engineering	15
Mathematics / Computer Science	11
Humanities	3
Education	3
Social Sciences	8
Physical & Life Sciences	7
Fine or Applied Arts	6
Liberal and General Studies	6
Health Professions	4
Intensive English Language	4
Other	13

(McMurtrie, 2000)

Since September 11, 2001, when the World Trade Center Towers in New York City were destroyed by a terrorist attack, education officials remain optimistic. Few international students have dropped out of United States' programs and immediate effects have been minimal. However, some exchange programs in the Middle East, South Asia, and Indonesia have been discontinued. Interest in American programs has declined. Some international students could not focus on their studies, and returned home as a result of parental anxiety over their presence in on United States' soil (Manzo, 2001).

Challenges and Stresses Faced by International Students in the United States

There are many academic, social/cultural, personal/psychological, and environmental challenges and stresses faced by international students. These are brought about by multiple factors: language barriers; breaks with family and peer support systems (Sandhu & Asrabadi, 1994); differences in cultural values and assumptions and communication; and learning styles (Ladd & Ralph, 1999); as well as differences in psychological self-constructs (Cross, 1995). The process of adaptation of a student is also likely to be related to the "cultural distance" between the norms, values, and customs of the society of origin and those of the receiving society (Tatar & Horenczyk, 2000).

Academic challenges. International students face many academic challenges when studying at colleges and universities in the United States. According to NAFSA: Association of International Educators (NAFSA), proficiency in spoken and written English is the greatest contributing factor towards the academic success of international students (Selvadurai, 1991-2). Yet, the most common academic problems pertain to language difficulties (Nicholson, 2001). While many international students are able to pass a standardized proficiency examination in English, they have difficulty functioning later in an academic setting. According to NAFSA, standardized tests are useful indicators, but they should not be used as the main criteria in the selection of students for admission. In evaluating a foreign student's performance for admission to a college, the admission officer, the teachers in the ESL program,

and the foreign student advisor must closely coordinate planning and decisio making (Selvadurai, 1991-2).

International students have difficulties in understanding lectures, expressing ideas, and writing reports, and these problems have been largel attributed to a lack of proficiency in English (Nicholson, 2001; Selvadurai, 19 2). Even though 70 percent of international students surveyed stated that th had significant difficulty with English language usage, 90 percent stated the received no instruction in English (Nicholson, 2001).

Of the four language macro-skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, writing is the skill that poses the most difficulty for international stude Besides the challenge of writing in grammatically correct English, students c have difficulty expressing their ideas through writing and speech, and at tim give the impression that they do not have complexity or depth to their thoug (Briguglio, 2000). One student expressed his needs in this area in this way:

> And not just [assistance with] writing, but expressing myself in intellectually mature language, in academic language. Because sometimes, that's what I think is a bit difficult for non English-speakin background people, to make a distinction between, for example, aca language, non-academic language, and slang (student cited in Brigu 2000, p. 427).

Students often express having problems reading texts in English, especially specialized texts, stating that they find it time-consuming and difficult (Nicho 2001). They frequently have problems reading what is written on the blackb

in class. Because international students may have trouble listening to and understanding fast-paced, extended lectures, they also have difficulty taking notes in class (Briguglio, 2000; Parker, 1999).

Learning styles often play a role in difficulties encountered by international students. In 1990, Grasha put forward the definition of learning styles as, "...the preferences students have for thinking, relating to others, and particular types of classroom environments and experiences" (Ladd, 1999, p. 2). Cornett believed that students could adjust their learning styles according to the teaching style and the tasks before them. The most often quoted definition of the term learning styles is by Keefe, who stated, "Learning styles are characteristic cognitive, affective, and psychological behaviors that serve as relatively stable indicators of how learners perceive, interact with, and respond to the learning environment" (Ladd, 1999, p. 2).

Often, international students are slow in adjusting their learning styles to the style of American education (Selvadurai, 1991). They are often accustomed to participating in class and relating to their professors in ways that may be very different from the American students in their classes. This can affect their ability to learn, to receive help, and to convey knowledge to the professor, all of which will negatively affect their learning experience and academic progress (Briguglio, 2000).

Furthermore, students are often shy about speaking. Many feel their spoken English is not fluent enough for the demands of the classroom (Briguglio, 2000). In technical, research-oriented, or pedagogical courses, international

students may lack the vocabulary to phrase coherent questions or comments. Acquiring new English words related to these areas requires extended time and patience on the part of both the student and faculty (Parker, 1999).

Many international students are trained to listen to instructors rather than to speak in class. In some cultures, instructors are seen as bearers of absolute truths and therefore should not be questioned. In the United States, students are invited to challenge their instructors and enter into debates. Often the more casual classroom style can be disturbing. While Western faculty-student relationships are based on expectations of mutual honesty and respect, many international students have a respect for authority far beyond their American peers, which does not carry with it expectations of expressed reciprocation (Selvadurai, 1991-2).

Research has found that learning styles differ in international students depending on country of origin. These differences have their roots in the self-constructs of the individual student and are derived from cultural beliefs, values, and the institutions that mold the structure and content of the self (Cross, 1995). Though Asian students may have serious problems understanding lectures, taking notes, answering questions, and writing essays, they prevent themselves from seeking help as part of their psychological dispositions (Ladd, 1999). Shyness and passivity in the classroom, as well as a preference towards collectivism rather than individualism, often interfere with students' willingness to independently reach out. Students may feel that putting their individual needs above the class needs or standing apart from the group in requiring personal

attention in class, is inappropriate (Cross, 1995). They may also feel that it is shameful to ask for help from the professor and that they should be able to succeed independently (Ladd, 1999). Students may equate not knowing an answer with losing face and being humiliated. They may be afraid to look inept in front of the teacher or peers, especially with feelings of inadequacy in using a second language (Beasley & Pearson, 1999). However, international students have also been found to prefer to receive instruction through listening and to cultivate close relationships with their professors (Ladd, 1999).

Moreover, international students are often unaccustomed to frequent testing and may have more experience taking essay-type examinations. The quick thinking require by multiple choice and short answer exams may create psychological barriers and tension among students. In some countries, final grades are based only on the final exam; however, in the United States, course grades are based on work done throughout the semester. Task-oriented students may be confused in settings where the process is valued as much as the actual product and class participation is a large part of the evaluation process (Balas, 2000; Selvadurai, 1999-2).

Another factor in academic learning is cross-cultural writing and thinking styles. Students in the United States are expected to present their arguments in the English tradition of the strictly linear, logical development of ideas. According to Beasley & Pearson, (1999):

> Essays are supposed to have an introduction which defines terms, the scope, focus, and theme of the thesis, as well as an outline of the

> structure or main points to be covered. The body develops in full the points outlined in the introduction (with a minimum of "irrelevancies") and the essay is rounded off with a conclusion that briefly summarizes the main points and theme of the essay (p.306).

The different writing styles between cultures involve different ideas of the responsibilities of the writer and reader. Chinese, Korean, and Japanese cultures place a much greater responsibility on the reader to interpret the message that the writer may only imply, yet not logically state in a linear manner. In addition, there are different patterns of ordering and structuring the written information presented (Beasley & Pearson, 1999).

Western tradition places much emphasis on comparing, discussing, and evaluating arguments, and students are expected to express viewpoints rather than simply duplicating an authoritative opinion. To quote McEvedy, an academic from the University of Melbourne (Beasley & Pearson, 1999):

> ...one of the most important qualities needed by a student to succeed is an ability to think logically and to develop a theme in a logical way with provision of appropriate "continuity". A student fluent in English but who lacks the insight and ability to do this could well struggle to obtain a degree so that I must rate fluency in English as less important than having a logical mind and the ability to appraise critically what is read or taught. Of course, if English expression is too poor to permit the student to state sufficiently clearly what he/she means, or to get down on paper sufficient

> information within a given time, chances of success in study are also poor. (p. 306)

Critical analysis is expected in United States' universities. However, this change in behavior can be very difficult for students who have been educated to practice rote learning and memorization, and who seldom question the teacher or information presented. In many countries, each subject of study at a university may have only one text and only offer one point of view to the student (Beasley & Pearson, 1999, personal communication, 2000). However, many educational researchers feel that this is an outdated stereotype and challenge this viewpoint (Beasley & Pearson, 1999).

Factors such as course structure, content, and academic standards can all be impediments to the academic goals of international students in the United States (Selvadurai, 1991-2). Instructional techniques such as discovery learning may seem inappropriate, foreign, and inefficient ways of learning (Parker, 1999). Other factors of the Western educational system that international students have identified as problematic are homework, grading differences, and teachers who are perceived as rude, who do not take extra time with students, and who may use what students feel is inappropriate or vulgar language.

Studies have shown a wide range of responses from professors concerning their understanding of international students. Some professors feel that they know well the needs of these students and try to accommodate student learning styles and language difficulties. Others respond that they are relatively unaware of these needs, or feel that the students should be molded to an

American learning style. Therefore the professors do not make changes in the classrooms to accommodate these students. Some faculty observed that international students did not integrate with American students, and incorrectly assumed this behavior was by choice. However, the students have stated that they do wish to integrate but need assistance from faculty within the classroom setting (Trice, 2001).

Social/cultural & personal/psychological challenges. International students are regarded as a population psychologically at risk. The results of most studies have shown that integration of international students is highly correlated with positive outcomes, and marginalization contributes to, or reflects, poor psychological adjustment (Tartar & Horenczyk, 2000). There is also a positive correlation between social alienation and powerlessness, meaninglessness, and normlessness (Nicholson, 2001). A study of international students from more than 50 different countries found that students reported higher than normal problems in the areas of anxiety, depression, psychosomatic symptoms, and paranoia. In a longitudinal study of Taiwanese students studying in the United States, more than half reported a decline in emotional well being. A recent study showed significant emotional distress in Japanese exchange students as long as 6 months after returning from a 1-year experience studying in a foreign country. The present body of knowledge regarding psychological adaptation of international students suggests an experience of significant acculturative stress (Tatar & Horenczyk, 2000).

Stressors that play major roles in mental health crises of international students include the following: culture shock expressed through anxiety, depression, hostility, tension, frustration, anxiety, anger, and stress; societal expectation for high academic performance; changes in social and economic status expressed through feelings of resentment and loss; and feelings of discrimination, alienation, and isolation (Nicholson 2000;Tatar & Horenczyk, 2001). According to Sandhu & Asrabadi (1994), homesickness, loneliness, fear, and pessimism are also major concerns.

Language difficulties, while playing a major role in academic problems, also contribute to personal and social problems. Being understood is associated with feelings of acceptance and appreciation. Confusion, frustration, depression, and low self-esteem are the results of not being understood. Language difficulties may lead international students to seek relationships with those who speak their first language, thus hampering integration into American social groups (Nicholson, 2001). American students may be complacent with their situation and not feel the need to go out of their way to socialize with foreign students (Sandhu & Asrabadi, 1994).

Often international students are unaware of cultural differences in friendship-building and dating etiquette, along with other Americans customs related to food habits, religious beliefs, and nonverbal communication. (Selvadurai, 1991). Issues regarding body language and physical contact may strongly affect international students. While students from Latin American countries may regard hugging as a common way to communicate, students from

other countries such as India may feel that such physical contact is extremely intrusive (Zibart, 2000).

A lack of integration into American social groups may occur because many students have come from a collectivist culture where individuals belong to a few stable in-groups and have intense relationships within those in-groups. This is different from Americans, who tend to belong to many in-groups with less intense attachments and social obligations. An international student who is more interdependent than an American student may perceive the American student as superficial and untrustworthy (Cross, 1995). The result is often a sense of powerlessness, meaninglessness, and social estrangement, leading to alienation (Sandhu & Asrabadi, 1994).

International students who are more interdependent than independent may seek to fit into American social groups by changing their behavior and attitudes, rather than expecting others to change. This can lead to guilt and a feeling of betraying one's native cultural and familial values. It can place students in a double bind situation, caught between the old values of their native land that they deeply respect, and the new values of the host culture that they feel they must embrace in order to succeed. This may also undermine personal identity and self-respect. All this leads to acculturative stress (Sandhu & Asrabadi, 1994).

Components of Successful International Programs at Post-Secondary Institutions

General requirements for serving international students have been put forth in the Handbook of Accreditation (2001). In summary, these guidelines require that the educational institution must demonstrate service to international

students in a legally and ethically responsible, unbiased, and sensitive manner (Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities, 2001). The Association of International Education Administrators (AIEA) also offers guidelines for international education at U.S. colleges and universities. These guidelines specify that there should exist a professional staff that can provide the required support services for international students (Schoorman, 2000).

According to NAFSA (2001), programs of international education take many forms and are located at colleges and universities with different purposes, sizes, and settings. Regardless of these differences, it is only when an educational institution makes a conscious commitment of resources to its international program that the program will be successful. Underlying such commitment are the following institutional principles put forward by NAFSA presented here is summary:

1. The institution should have a clearly stated policy, endorsed by the governing board, which includes goals and objectives of the international student program developed by the institution. The policy should include planning and budget considerations. Personnel and resources-both administrative and academic-should be sufficient to assure that the program can be operated in ways that are consistent with the principles put forth in the document.
2. The executive staff of the institution should discuss with the faculty and administrative staff the implications of the international program policy for the academic programs and staff.

3. Programs should be closely related to and consistent with the purposes and strengths of the institution.

4. Regardless of program size, the institution should acknowledge its responsibility to demonstrate sensitivity to cultural needs – social, religious, dietary, and housing. These must be accounted for in the planning and execution of the program.

5. Services should be performed by personnel who are trained for their particular responsibilities. Faculty and staff should receive appropriate training for the activities they manage.

6. Staff and faculty should develop and maintain respect and sensitivity towards those of different cultures.

7. The institution should periodically evaluate programs, policies, and services, and program goals.

The admissions process. Any international program begins with the recruitment and admission of students. NAFSA (2002) has put forth principles of good practice for these processes. The goal of the international admissions process is to identify, attract, and admit qualified students whose educational goals fit well with the mission and offering of the recruiting institution. Staff working toward the admission of international students should have specialized knowledge, skills, and resources, and professional judgment.

The admissions office should have a strong commitment to student service and development, a clear understanding of the institution's mission, policies, and standards, an ability to clearly communicate with prospective

international students and recruits, and conduct outreach in an ethical manner. The admissions office should understand the processes and requirements of the immigration-regulating branches of the U.S. government and responsibly manage record keeping according to accepted professional standards. The department must also consider the differences in document-issuing practices around the world and evaluate documentation accurately and fairly, while effectively coordinating its efforts with other offices involved in the admissions process for international students (NAFSA, 2002).

International student services. As stated in NAFSA documentation (2001), it is the responsibility of the host institution to meet the needs of its international students in an organized, directed, and funded manner. Regardless of the number of international students present on campus, the college or university is required to offer a basic level of support that enables the student, once accepted into the institution, to be successful. The following NAFSA principles support these services.

1. The host institution should clearly state its intentions to provide special support services to international students. These services should include advisement and counseling, mandated and technical services in compliance with U.S. government regulations, and coordination and liaison with the community.
2. There must be one unit in the host institution responsible for coordinating these services with clear and acknowledged designation of responsibility for these services. This must occur regardless of the number of international students present at the institution or level of funding.

3. An orientation program should be in place that introduces students to the physical environment, registration procedures, academic policies, housing, counseling and health services, visa requirements and INS regulations, and financial matters. Social and intercultural activities should be offered. Advising services should be provided on an ongoing basis with respect to personal counseling, emergency needs, and preparation for departure and reentry to home countries.

4. The staff should maintain high ethical and professional standards.

Educator. NAFSA (2001) also has many guidelines for international educators. Among them are:

1. Knowledge of the cultural adjustment process.

2. Counseling and advising skills.

3. Awareness of how culture and language influence learning styles.

4. Knowledge of learning another language, educational systems other than those in the U.S, and cultural values and assumptions and their effect on interactions with individuals and groups.

5. Intercultural communication skills

NAFSA provides grants to colleges and universities, whose staff and faculty develop model programs to support international students. Final reports about these programs can be obtained free of charge for use at other institutions. Examples of such program topics are as follows. In the area of international student skill development topics include Promoting Student Leadership Development and Home Country Reentry/Transitional Issues for International

Students. In the area of culture shock and helping international students understand America topics include Intercultural Field Trips/Exploring the Local Landscapes; Understanding U.S. Culture and Diversity (including Religious Diversity, Holiday Traditions, and Native American Issues); Understanding U.S History, Politics, and the Judicial System; Promoting Cross-Gender Understanding and Gender Specific Issues; Appreciating U.S. Art and Entertainment; and Media and Contemporary Issues. In the area of International Students Adjustment program topics include Orientation/Peer Mentoring of International Students, Cross-Cultural Communication Issues and Workshops, and International/American Student Roommate Issues (NAFSA, 1999).

Successful components of student service. Services to international students are best coordinated through an International Student Services office. Services should include pre-arrival information and assistance, orientation activities, ongoing advisory services, advocacy and intervention, and the development of programs that enhance interaction between students and members of the academic community. Pre-arrival information can be organized in a variety of ways. Programs or information on a variety of topics pertaining to life in the United Stated can be offered by agencies such as governmental, private institutions, or alumni groups in the home country, or by the United States institution, using a variety of multilingual media. This includes printed information packets, brochures, videos, twenty-four-hour message systems, electronic mail, and the World Wide Web. Current trends in international student admissions show a predominance of Asians, those from affluent backgrounds, and more

men than women, suggesting that efforts should be made to recruit a broad demographic of international student (Schoorman, 2000).

Orientation for international students is one of the most common form international student services offered by colleges and universities. It typicall includes immigration information, an introduction to university requirements services, and an introduction to the community, focusing on cross-cultural differences. An academic and discipline-specific orientation with the particip of faculty members is strongly recommended (Schoorman, 2000). Summer bridge programs have been created where international students come for t summer prior to their first semester at the university and engage in activities focus on cultural adjustment as well as academic and language skills (Keza 2000). Weekend orientation retreats designed for international students hav also been found to be more effective than single day orientations where all students are addressed (NAFSA, 1999).

Ongoing advising services unique to international students include immigration advising, cross-cultural counseling, social and cultural adaptatio and preparation for departure and return. Counseling services should be designed to help alleviate culture shock and home sickness, and promote understanding of cultural differences between the social norms of their hom country and the U.S., and adaptation to the U.S. educational. Ongoing advis services unique to international students include immigration advising, cross cultural counseling, social and cultural adaptation, and preparation for depa and return. Counseling services should be designed to help alleviate culture

shock and homesickness, and to promote understanding of cultural differences between the social norms of their home country and the U.S., and adaptation to the U.S. educational system. Other services that should be offered to international students are tutoring, mentoring, and health services (Schoorman, 2000).

An important component of an international program is a comprehensive section of the university web site for international students. Students can download vital information while still in their country of origin to better prepare themselves for their new intercultural university experience. Three excellent examples can be found on the web sites of the University of San Francisco (www.usfa.edu), Beliot College(www.beliot.edu), and Montclair State University (www.montclair.edu). A comprehensive student handbook designed specifically for international students is also useful and often can be downloaded from the web site.

Successful academic components. Several international educators have indicated that faculty members are the most crucial players in the process of successful internationalization of a university, and therefore, of the success of its international students. Many faculty members who have expertise in this area are underutilized. Most will need to develop expertise, and several strategies have been suggested. These include workshops on international issues, incentives such as release time and stipends for curriculum development, the study of a foreign language and culture, and opportunities to teach abroad and for involvement in extra-curricular international activities. Both faculty and staff must

become globally literate and cross-culturally sensitive. Professional development workshops, attendance at national and international conferences, and the active recruitment of internationally oriented personnel are all important (Schoorman, 2000).

International students can help to educate faculty, staff, students, and the surrounding community. These students must be given opportunities to serve as educational resources in classroom discussions, as peer and study-abroad counselors, as guest speakers on cultural topics, and as organizers of cross-cultural events (Schoorman, 2000). This will help lead faculty, staff, and students to intercultural adaptability, including listening skills and the ability to interpret behavior and apply social or experiential learning in different cultural contexts (Zeszotarski, 2001).

The classroom environment is the main arena in which the international student's needs must be recognized. There is a need for clear and comprehensive instructions about academic assignments with timely diagnostic feedback. During lectures, the extended use of overhead transparencies, and printed lecture notes or lecture outlines are helpful to international students. Professors should speak slowly and clearly, without the use of slang, and write clearly on the board. Students benefit from teaching styles that incorporate practical examples to illustrate theoretical concepts and use modeling and coaching of metacognitive strategies (Beasley & Pearson, 1999; Briguglio, 2000). Ongoing curriculum development at some universities has transformed courses from traditional teacher-directed courses involving lectures and tutorial in which

students are relatively passive. Changes produced shorter but more frequent lectures, with either more frequent meeting times or extended class times that progressed at a slower pace. Workshop-type formats that allow the student to be a more active and self-directed learner are being incorporated at many schools (Balas, 2000; Parker, 1999). Groups designed to increase cultural mixing, serve to undermine the tendency to self-segregation. More presentation may be required of students (Trice, 2001). Field trips incorporated into curricula enhance cultural and historical understanding (NAFSA, 1999). A learner support program utilizing both faculty and peers is also effective (Beasley & Pearson, 1999). For those courses in which class participation is factored into the final grade, some professors allow good participation to enhance student performance but do not lower the grade if class participation is infrequent (Balas, 2000).

Ladd and Ruby (1999) suggest that since many foreign students are used to class lecture with minimal participation, the instructor can begin to slowly introduce open-ended questions that require opinion, problem solving, and decision making. If these concepts are introduced immediately, international students may be uncomfortable and fearful. The instructor should build the students' self-confidence and trust. "Thinking on your feet" exercises such as questions regarding simple self-description to describing an object and progressing to hypothetical questions the student must answer, can be used. In addition, offering students tips in class on how to study or utilize a certain new learning style is helpful. Instructors should also be careful when using idioms that the student may take literally instead of figuratively. For example, the phrase,

"quite a few..." may mean simply "few" to the student instead of "many" (Ladd & Ruby, 1999). It has been recommended that at the beginning of the term, instructors should also meet with international students after class, specifically to discuss methods of teaching, expectations, and class rules. According to Ladd and Ruby, "The classroom is not a place to play the game of 'let's see if the students can figure out the rules'; it is a place where cognitive and affective growth can—and should—flourish" (1999, p. 6).

Outside of the classroom, academic assistance and support can be offered through tutorials and tutoring sessions, seminars on communication and study skills, and one-to-one consultation and support, all geared toward the international student's unique needs (Briguglio, 2000). In general, a broad dialogue between international students, faculty, and native students is very important. Informal discussions, in which international students express their academic expectations and concerns, could be valuable (Balas, 2000).

When communication difficulties arise, it is usually more complex than just language problems because language is intertwined with culture. Therefore, when intercultural communication takes place, it is important for all parties to take into account differences in past experiences, behavioral norms, beliefs, and body language (Trice, 2001).

Successful cultural/personal/psychological components. Researchers agree on three functional aspects of social support. These are emotional support involving intimacy, concern, and attachment; instrumental support, involving

provision of assistance; and informational support, involving the provision of information or guidance relevant to the situation (Tartar & Horenczyk, 2000).

Developmental educators, educational psychologists, and sociologists agree that peer-group interactions form a significant bonding that shapes students' social and academic integration as well as their institutional commitment. Students who are personally satisfied through forming strong partnerships with peers and institutional staff and teaching faculty, and who participate in school and community related activities, have a high retention rate. Positive experiences and expectations within a peer-group are associated with high academic performance. Institutional programs that facilitate the formation of connections with an individual student, a group, or an institution as a whole may improve the international student's experience of and persistence at the university, regardless of the demography of the student (Ikegulu, 1999).

Within the academic setting, faculty can assign a diverse group of students to a study team as a way of encouraging international students to speak out and avoid culture shock (Reingold, 1998). The internationalization of social/cultural events on campus is an important aspect of an international campus. Two successful outcomes will be that students of all cultures feel welcome and positive intercultural communication and intermingling becomes the norm. All administrators, faculty, and students would be aware and appreciative of the cultural diversity of the campus and actively become involved in facilitating cross-cultural interaction. Faculty and staff can ask international students affiliated with their departments what events would most interest them. The

students can be drawn into the planning of these events. If students are uncomfortable participating with the large groups, smaller events can be planned specifically for them (Trice, 2001).

Other events can involve the entire campus community, not just a specific department. Some examples of these types of events are the formation of student organizations, international food fairs, dances, plays, film festivals, music recitals, and poetry readings. Cross-cultural forums on a variety of international and personal topics can be organized as well as weekend retreats (NAFSA, 1999). These events are often organized by the students themselves (Schoorman, 2000).

Residence halls can facilitate cross-cultural integration through residential arrangements. It is generally found best to place international students in the same room with a student whose first language is English. Residence halls can facilitate guest speakers on international issues, show films, provide discussion sessions, and create a buddy system and/or peer advisor program that supports cross-cultural transitions and friendships, and helps the student to solve many other academic and practical problems (Reingold, 1998; Schoorman, 2000). It has been shown that peer programs can have a significant positive effect on the adjustment of international students (Nicholson, 2001). Residence assistants should be culturally educated and sensitive. Culturally appropriate meals should be offered in the dining halls if possible (Schoorman, 2000).

Henderson, et al. (as put forth in Nicholson, 2001) offered nine recommendations to international students to help them manage culture shock.

They are: (1) Be mentally prepared. The student must be sympathetic and non-judgmental towards other cultures. (2) Be culturally prepared. The student should prepare at home by learning as much as possible about the host country and how living conditions there might differ from those at home. (3) Be linguistically prepared. International students need to learn as much about the host language as possible to reduce failures and feelings of helplessness. (4) Be involved with hosts. Students should socialize with people of the host culture since this will lead to fewer adjustment problems than those who remain isolated from their hosts. (5) Be creative and experimental. International students must be willing to expose themselves to many types of people and ideas. (6). Be culturally sensitive. Sojourners need to be aware of customs and traditions of the host country. (7) Be patient and flexible. In a new environment, the sojourner must be willing to be inconvenienced and wait for answers that may take time. (8) Be realistic in expectations. (9) Accept the challenge of intercultural experiences. This will aid personal growth and allow experiences to be more fulfilling (Nicholson, 2001).

International students should also be encouraged to participate in cultural activities to develop leadership skills. Examples are participation in student government organizations, campus media, student counseling, and resident hall advising. This allows the student to be exposed to the needs of all students and help to problem solve using a variety of cultural perspectives (Schoorman, 2000).

Suggestions from International Students

International students have suggestions that they feel will help them succeed at U.S. post-secondary institutions. The following is a list of these suggestions and summaries of student comments (Nicholson, 2001).

1. Class size should be small. This allows for more opportunity to express oneself to the professor and to talk easily with other students in discussion groups. In large groups, students speak quickly to allow for more students to participate. Smaller classes allow for a relaxed atmosphere.
2. Students should be invited to social events such as potluck dinners.
3. American students should help in finding research articles, provide transportation, and help in other ways without being asked. They should be friendly, talk to international students, invite them to their homes for dinner, and offer housing during times when students cannot live in the dormitories. They should allow the students to visit the American student's friends and relatives in other places when they travel.
4. Professors should take time to listen to international students and to show an understanding of their cultures in class discussions.
5. Professors should have more office hours.
6. Extra tutoring hours should be offered.
7. Professors should speak slowly in class, use simpler vocabulary, print or use good handwriting on the board, and distribute handouts of their lecture notes.

8. Professors should keep promises, invite international students to dinner, and develop relationships with them.
9. The Office of International Student Services should operate in the following ways. It should help but not control the students, help with employment problems, provide a counseling center only for international students to deal with homesickness and interpersonal relations, make available a place to stay when students arrive, and notify the student beforehand about transportation to campus from the airport. The office should exercise its authority when addressing academic problems and provide support for international students in communicating their problems to various departments.

Summary

International students are a valued part of the educational system in the United States, bringing with them a belief in the universal values of education, cultural diversity, and good will. The difficulties faced by international students have not changed much since the early part of the 20th century, even though the number of students has grown and the diversity of countries of origin has expanded. The primary difficulty for international students remains language. Even with the ability to pass an English proficiency exam, once a student must function academically and socially using English, many difficulties arise.

Post-secondary educational institutions that invite international students to their campuses must provide appropriate academic, cultural, and personal support for the student. This support is usually coordinated through the

International Student Services Department staffed by qualified and trained staff. All aspects of the student's life can be addressed through this office.

In classes, faculty should demonstrate cultural understanding and accommodate the student such that the classroom experience is both positive and challenging. Course curriculum must be compatible with the international student's learning style, or else instruction in adjustment to the United States' system of education must be provided. Tutoring and peer mentoring can provide support outside of the classroom.

Social support on campus can come from many campus community members including staff, faculty, and fellow students, both international and U.S. Course curriculum, cultural forums and events, and social occasions can all assist the international student in adjusting to life in a new country with the added benefit that the campus community as a whole can become more internationally aware.

This international awareness is vital to our nation and the world as a whole. Prosperity, health, and peace are no longer determined by each nation but are dependent on all nations honoring the humanity in all beings. This can be brought about or enhanced by intercultural understanding in the context of higher knowledge, ideals, and hope, realized as change. Therefore, international students must remain a vital part of the United States' system of higher education. Through this means, intercultural understanding may have a chance to flourish faster than the seeds of fear, doubt, and resentment can grow within the seemingly separate populations of the world.

Methods and Procedures

Sample and Site

The sample population includes international students enrolled in graduate and undergraduate classes at Dominican University of California. Approximately 55 students form the sample. The site was this researcher's office at Dominican. Also, many students preferred to complete the survey in their homes and return them later.

Access and Permissions

Dr. Wes Young, Director of the Office of International Student Services has given his permission to conduct this study. Dr. Ken Porada, Provost, has been informed of the study.

Data Gathering Strategies

The original strategy was to meet privately or in small groups with international students at Dominican so that the survey could be explained to the students. Some students did this, but many preferred to take their surveys home and return them later. Students completed the survey questions and some also added personal comments. Some students mailed their surveys, some e-mailed them, and some completed them while this researcher waited to assist them. An attempt was made to contact all international students at Dominican via e-mail, postal mail, and phone calls. The student list used was not completely accurate. Some students on the list were actually not attending, much of the contact information was incorrect, and some students who were attending were not on the original list and were added later.

Data Analysis Approach

This quasi-experimental survey includes both qualitative and quantitative information. Simple percentages have been used to analyze Likert scale (interval) results.

Ethical Standards

This study adheres to the guidelines for human subject research in accord with the American Psychological Association (APA, 2001) ethical standards. Also, this study was reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board for Protection of Human Subjects.

Results

Of the 55 surveys distributed, 38 were returned. All surveys were used. The usable return rate was 69%. All respondents were international students attending Dominican University of California.

Part A of the survey addressed demographic information. Some information was not completed due to the respondent's desire to remain anonymous. Fifty-four percent of respondents were women, 42% were men, and 4% did not identify their gender. The respondents ranged in age from 19 years to 27 years (M=23 years). The average length of time spent in the United States was 18.5 months and the average length of time at Dominican was 14 months. The length of time speaking English ranged widely from 2 months to 15 years. Thirty percent of the respondents were graduate students, 59% were undergraduates of which 24% were freshman, and 11% did not respond to this question. Sixty-eight percent of respondents were from Asia, 19% were from a

wide range of countries in the Americas, Europe, and Africa, and 13% gave no data. For a list of countries of origin and native languages, see appendices C and D respectively.

Part B of the survey addressed the English language proficiency of international students. Concerning the question, "How would you rate your English proficiency in the following?" four areas were addressed: listening/understanding, speaking, reading, and writing. In the category of listening/understanding, 60% rated themselves as either excellent (22%) or very good (38%). Thirty-eight percent rated themselves as fair. Concerning speaking, 40% rated themselves as either excellent (16%) or very good (24%). However, 57% rated themselves as either fair (43%) or poor (14%). In the area of reading, 40% responded that they were excellent or very good while 38% rated themselves as fair. Writing skills were lowest, with 64% of the respondents rating themselves as either fair or poor.

Part B – ENGLISH LANGUAGE BACKGROUND
How would you rate your English proficiency in the following?

	Excellent	Very Good	Fair	Poor	Unknown
Listening/ understanding	8 (22%)	14 (38%)	14 (38%)	0	1 (3%)
Speaking	6 (16%)	9 (24%)	16 (43%)	5 (14%)	1 (3%)
Reading	8 (22%)	14 (38%)	14 (38%)	0	1 (3%)
Writing	3 (8%)	9 (24%)	22 (59%)	2 (5%)	1 (3%)

Part C of the international student survey was composed of 40 questions. These questions addressed academic skills applied to the following: students' classroom participation; relationships with faculty and peers; ability to understand and complete assignments and exams; and recourse to academic support services. All results can be found in Appendix B.

Seventy-five percent of all students surveyed responded that they understood most of what their professors said in class lectures. However, 1 felt that professors spoke too quickly when lecturing. Seventy-nine percent students surveyed responded that they could understand their professors w they spoke personally. Overall, listening skills were good and responses we consistent.

Seventy-three percent of students responded that they understood m what was written in their textbooks, with 79% stating they understood what written on the white board in class. It should be noted that 89% of respond reported that they understood typed handouts the professors gave them. Si seven percent felt they were able to finish reading assignments on time. Six percent felt they could not. Overall, reading skills were good and responses consistent.

Regarding writing skills, 89% of respondents stated they were able t finish writing assignments on time. However, students reported having diffic with various writing tasks. Thirty-seven percent had difficulty taking notes in in English, and 34% stated they had difficulty writing essays, with 42% being uncertain. Eight respondents (21%) felt they did not have difficulty writing es

Questions regarding speaking skills were related to interaction with professors and students in class as well as out of class. Only 34% of studen stated they were not afraid to speak in class and were not afraid of making mistakes when speaking. Thirty-seven percent of respondents stated they w afraid they would be perceived as stupid if they asked questions in class an

agreed with the statement that they could not express their true thoughts in spoken English. Twenty one percent were afraid to ask questions of their classmates for fear they would be thought stupid. Of the students who were afraid of speaking up in class, only 3 respondents felt it was rude to ask questions. However, 29% felt it was rude to disagree with the professor and 34% of respondents were uncertain.

The last area of consideration was resources international students utilized for help. While 65% stated they asked their classmates for help, 42% stated they asked only international students from their home region for help and support. Thirty-four percent of students did not feel comfortable participating in study groups with other students, with 18% being uncertain. Thirty-four percent of students stated they sought help through academic support services (tutoring), and 29% stated they made frequent use of academic support services.

While 68% of international students felt their professors respected them, only 55% felt their professors wanted to help them, and only 45% felt the professors were willing to spend extra time helping them. Only 47% felt that their academic advisor was willing to spend extra time helping them.

Fifty-three percent of international students stated that they asked their professors for help. Only 29% stated that their professors understood their personal and academic challenges, while 53% felt their academic advisor understood these challenges. Sixty-one percent of international students wanted their professors to know more about their culture and 50% wanted professors to include more about their culture and experience in class.

Analysis of Themes

The areas of strength for the international student population participating in this survey are listening and understanding spoken English and reading and understanding written English. Speaking and writing in English are areas needing more support. One student wrote, "I have no problems in reading and understanding but when it comes to write in English and speak up in class, it is difficult." Other reasons for difficulties in speaking in class are explained in the following quotes from three different respondents:

> I understand all of study materials because of the dictionary. It's impossible to survive as an international students without it!!! In Japan, we don't have much presentation and discussion compare to here. Therefore, it's hard to speak up in the class, even though I have class in Japan.

> It is tough to speak up in front of the class especially because I am shy. I am afraid to make mistakes and my pronunciation. When it comes to write, I usually take longer than my normal to remember the right words that express what I really want to say on the essays. My essays don't quite express what I want to say.

> It's hard to participate in a discussion in the class, and also I sometimes feel so sorry for other students since I take a time to say even a short comment. I feel like I'm stealing and wasting their time.

Difficulties in these areas lead to a lack of cultural understanding

and utilization of assistance from faculty and students who are not from international students' home countries. A large percentage of international students have difficulty participating verbally in class. This is based on their fear of rejection from others because of poor language skills.

Sixty-nine percent of international students either did not feel that their professors understood them or they were unsure. They were unclear about the level of interest their professors had in giving them extra assistance. One student stated, "I think DU's most professors are still unaware of the difference between American students & foreign students." Therefore, a large percentage of students did not ask their professors for help. The students felt that their academic advisors were slightly more understanding of their needs but were not significantly more available than the professors.

International students made moderate use of academic support services and less than a third made use of these services frequently. Some students wrote comments on their surveys requesting tutoring services, which seemed to indicate that the students were not aware that these services were already available to them. There was a positive correlation between strong language skills and feelings that professors understood and cared for the students. There was also a positive relationship between language skills and class participation, as well as the student's ability to interact inside and outside the classroom with students from other countries.

Patterns similar to those of other colleges and universities were found at Dominican. Language proficiency was positively correlated to cultural adaptation,

social integration, and academic progress. Social integration and cultural adaptation also directly and positively correlated to academic success. The difficulties that were reported by international students at Dominican University of California are therefore similar to those reported by international students at colleges and universities throughout the United States. It can thus be assumed that the components of successful international programs used at other institutions of higher learning will be applicable and useful at Dominican University of California.

Discussion

Summary of Major Findings or Results

In general, the majority of international students attending Dominican University of California were able to understand class lectures and written materials and could finish their work in a timely manner. Students understood written handouts given in class, which supplemented lectures.

International students identified writing assignments and speaking in the classroom as special challenges. Many international students had difficulty participating in class discussion or asking questions, and most did not enter into debate with the professor in class. Students were afraid of being perceived as stupid. When asking for help, many international students sought out those from their native country and did not make full use of fellow classmates, professors, or advisors. While most students were not confident about their writing skills, less than half of those students sought support through tutoring.

International students at Dominican University of California need further assistance from faculty, staff, and other students. Communication is the key issue. International students need to know that faculty and staff are available to them and are interested in learning about their cultures. There is a need to develop and clearly define resources for international students.

Limitations of the Study

Approximately 31% of international students attending Dominican did not complete the survey. There may be differing reasons for this. One student, who chose not to complete the survey, said he/she was afraid of retribution because what he/she had to say was critical and would also allow for easy identification of the student. There may have been other students who were also afraid to fill out the survey. Several students who did complete the survey needed to be assured that they would not be penalized for their responses. Therefore, this survey may have been completed primarily by students who already felt a certain level of trust and who had accomplished a significant level of cultural adaptation and academic success. Had all international students completed the survey, the results may have shown greater difficulties in language proficiency, academics, and social bonding.

Another limitation of the study is that the survey was a self-report. Students' self-reports of their skills may vary from what a faculty member's evaluation of the students may be. This could be due to various factors such as lack of objectivity, or personal or national pride. It is common for international students to feel pressure to achieve academic excellence.

Overall Significance of the Study

Dominican University of California is committed to providing international students an excellent education. The university wishes to recruit an increasing number of international students to its campus and therefore seeks to expand and improve resources for these students. Understanding the needs of international students is the first step in reaching these goals. This researcher will use the results of this study to create a staff development model for faculty and staff in-service. Areas to be developed will include facilitation of communication and cultural understanding, as well as strategies and tools to support academic progress. Secondarily, supportive strategies relative to personal/psychological and social/cultural integration will be discussed.

Implications for Future Research

This research study focused on the academic needs of international students at Dominican University of California. It did not focus on the personal/ psychological, environmental, or social/cultural needs of this population. Because it has been shown that these factors greatly influence academic excellence, and because Dominican seeks to establish itself as an international university of the highest order, further research in these areas would be beneficial to all.

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Appendix A

Survey Instrument

International Student Academic Needs Assessment

Date: _____

Part A - DEMOGRAPHICS:

1. Gender: _____male _____female
2. Age in years: _____
3. Native country: _____
4. Length of time in U.S: _____
5. Length of time at DUC: _____
6. First language: _____
7. How long speaking English? _____
8. What is your major? _____
9. Class level: _____
10. Residence during the school year? _____

Part B – ENGLISH LANGUAGE BACKGROUND
How would you rate your English proficiency in the following?

	Excellent	Very Good	Fair	Poor
Listening/ understanding				
Speaking				
Reading				
Writing				

Any other comments about your English language proficiency?

_____

_____

_____

Part C – ACADEMIC NEEDS

The following are a series of statements regarding your academic life at Dominican University of California. Circle the response that best reflects your opinion, feelings, or practice:
(**SA** = strongly agree, **A** = agree, **UN** = uncertain, **D** = disagree, **SD** = strongly disagree

1. I understand most of what my professors are saying when lecturing in class. SA A UN D SD
2. My professors speak too quickly when lecturing. SA A UN D SD
3. I understand what my professors say when speaking to me personally. SA A UN D SD
4. I understand most of what is written in my textbooks. SA A UN D SD
5. I am able to finish reading assignments on time. SA A UN D SD
6. I understand what is written on the white board in class. SA A UN D SD

7. I understand the typed handouts my professors give me.	SA A UN D SD
8. I am able to finish writing assignments on time.	SA A UN D SD
9. I seek tutoring to help me write my papers.	SA A UN D SD
10. I have difficulty taking notes in class.	SA A UN D SD
11. I take notes in English in class.	SA A UN D SD
12. My learning style is compatible with my professors' teaching styles.	SA A UN D SD
13. I have difficulty writing essays.	SA A UN D SD
14. I have difficulty organizing my written work correctly.	SA A UN D SD
15. I cannot express my true thoughts in written English.	SA A UN D SD
16. I cannot express my true thoughts in spoken English.	SA A UN D SD
17. I am afraid to speak up during class.	SA A UN D SD
18. I am afraid of making mistakes when speaking in class.	SA A UN D SD
19. I feel it is not appropriate to disagree with my professors.	SA A UN D SD
20. I would like my professors to know more about my culture.	SA A UN D SD
21. My professors should include more of my culture & experience in class.	SA A UN D SD
22. My professors understand my personal and academic challenges.	SA A UN D SD
23. My professors want to help me.	SA A UN D SD
24. My professors are willing to spend extra time helping me.	SA A UN D SD
25. My academic advisor understands my personal and academic challenges.	SA A UN D SD
26. My academic advisor is willing to spend extra time helping me.	SA A UN D SD
27. My professors show me respect.	SA A UN D SD
28. My classroom is too informal.	SA A UN D SD

33. I should only be graded on written work, not on my class participation. SA A UN D SD
34. I feel it is rude to ask questions during class. SA A UN D SD
35. I am afraid people will think I am stupid if I ask questions in class. SA A UN D SD
36. I am afraid my classmates will think I am stupid if I ask them questions. SA A UN D SD
37. I ask my professors for help. SA A UN D SD
38. I ask my classmates for help. SA A UN D SD
39. I ask only international students from my home region for help and support. SA A UN D SD
40. I make frequent use of academic support services (tutoring). SA A UN D SD

If you would like to further explain any of your responses from the statements above, please do so here.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Part D – OTHER GENERAL NEEDS/COMMENTS

1. What else could the university do to support you academically?

_____
_____
_____

2. Do you have any other comments about your linguistic or educational needs?

_____
_____
_____

Appendix B

Survey Results

Part A - DEMOGRAPHICS: Total # of respondents: 38, Response rate : 69%

1. **Gender**: male: 16 (42%) female: 20 (54%) 4% unknown
2. **Age in years**: range from 19 to 37;average: 23 years
3. **Native countries**: See appendix C
4. **Length of time in U.S**: Average = 18.5 months (1 ½ years)
5. **Length of time at DUC**: average = 14 months
6. **First language**: See appendix D
7. **How long speaking English**: range = 2 mo. to 15 yrs.
8. **Class level**: graduate = 30% undergraduate = 59% freshman = 24% unknown: 11%

Part B – ENGLISH LANGUAGE BACKGROUND
How would you rate your English proficiency in the following?

	Excellent	Very Good	Fair	Poor	Unknown
Listening/ understanding	8 (22%)	14 (38%)	14 (38%)	0	1 (3%)
Speaking	6 (16%)	9 (24%)	16 (43%)	5 (14%)	1 (3%)
Reading	8 (22%)	14 (38%)	14 (38%)	0	1 (3%)
Writing	3 (8%)	9 (24%)	22 (59%)	2 (5%)	1 (3%)

Any other comments about your English language proficiency? See appendix E.

Part C – ACADEMIC NEEDS
The following are a series of statements regarding your academic life at Dominican University of California. Circle the response that best reflects your opinion, feelings, or practice:
(**SA** = strongly agree, **A** = agree, **UN** = uncertain, **D** = disagree, **SD** = strongly disagree **NR** = no response

	SA	A	SA & A	UN	D	SD	D & SD	NR
1. I understand most of what my professors are saying when lecturing in class	11 (29%)	17 (45%)	27 (74%)	7 (18%)	2 (5%)	0		1
2. My professors speak too quickly when lecturing.	0	6 (16%)		13 (35%)	12 (32%)	6 (16%)	18 (49%)	1
3. I understand what my professors say when speaking to me personally.	14 (37%)	16 (42%)	30 (79%)	6 (16%)	1 (3%)	0		1
4. I understand most of what is written in my textbooks.	16 (42%)	12 (32%)	28 (73%)	8 (21%)	1 (3%)	0		1
5. I am able to finish reading assignments on time.	13 (34%)	12 (32%)	25 (67%)	6 (16%)	4 (11%)	2 (5%)	6 (16%)	1
6. I understand what is written on the white board in class	10 (26%)	20 (53%)	30 (79%)	6 (16%)	0	1 (3%)		1

	SA	A	SA & A	UN	D	SD	D & SD	NR
7. I understand the typed handouts my professors give me.	13 (34%)	21 (55%)	34 (89%)	3 (8%)	0	0		1

8.	I am able to finish writing assignments on time.	12 (32%)	22 (58%)	34 (89%)	1 (3%)	2 (5%)	0		1
9.	I seek tutoring to help me write my papers.	5 (13%)	8 (21%)	13 (34%)	13 (34%)	6 (16%)	4 (11%)	10 (26%)	2
10.	I have difficulty taking notes in class.	3 (8%)	11 (29%)	14 (37%)	8 (21%)	8 (21%)	7 (18%)	15 (39%)	1
11.	I take notes in English in class.	10 (26%)	18 (47%)	28 (74%)	8 (21%)	1 (3%)	0		1
12.	My learning style is compatible with my professors' teaching styles.	5 (13%)	8 (21%)	13 (34%)	15 (39%)	7 (18%)	0		3
13.	I have difficulty writing essays.	4 (11%)	9 (24%)	13 (34%)	16 (42%)	7 (18%)	1 (3%)	8 (21%)	1
14.	I have difficulty organizing my written work correctly.	5 (13%)	5 (13%)	10 (26%)	9 (24%)	14 (37%)	3 (8%)	17 (45%)	2
15.	I cannot express my true thoughts in written English.	3 (8%)	10 (26%)	13 (34%)	7 (18%)	12 (32%)	5 (13%)	17 (45%)	1
16.	I cannot express my true thoughts in spoken English.	6 (16%)	8 (21%)	14 (37%)	6 (16%)	12 (32%)	5 (13%)	17 (45%)	1
17.	I am afraid to speak up during class.	6 (16%)	11 (29%)	17 (45%)	7(18%)	6 (16%)	7 (18%)	13 (34%)	1
18.	I am afraid of making mistakes when speaking in class.	6 (16%)	12 (32%)	18 (47%)	6 (16%)	10 (26%)	3 (8%)	13 (34%)	1
19.	I feel it is not appropriate to disagree with my professors.	1 (3%)	10 (26%)	11 (29%)	13 (34%)	6 (16%)	7 (18%)	13 (34%)	1
20.	I would like my professors to know more about my culture.	8 (21%)	15 (40%)	23 (61%)	7(18%)	5 (13%)	2 (5%)	7 (18%)	1
21.	My professors should include more of my culture & experience in class.	6 (16%)	13 (34%)	19 (50%)	10 (26%)	4 (11%)	4 (11%)	8 (21%)	1
22.	My professors understand my personal and academic challenges.	5 (13%)	6 (16%)	11 (29%)	15 (40%)	9 (24%)	2 (5%)	11 (29%)	1
23.	My professors want to help me.	5 (13%)	16 (42%)	21 (55%)	11 (29%)	5 (13%)	0		1
24.	My professors are willing to spend extra time helping me.	4 (11%)	13 (34%)	17 (45%)	13 (34%)	5 (13%)	2 (5%)	6 (16%)	1
25.	My academic advisor understands my personal and academic challenges.	7 (18%)	13 (34%)	20 (53%)	11(29%)	3 (8%)	3 (8%)	6 (16%)	1
26.	My academic advisor is willing to spend extra time helping me.	5 (13%)	13 (34%)	18 (47%)	11(29%)	6 (16%)	2 (5%)	8 (21%)	1
27.	My professors show me respect.	9 (24%)	17 (45%)	26 (68%)	7(18%)	4 (11%)	0		1
28.	My classroom is too informal.	0	5 (13%)		16 (42%	15 (39%)	1 (3%)	16 (42%)	1

		SA	A	SA & A	UN	D	SD	D & SD	NR
29.	I feel comfortable participating in study groups with other students.	4 (11%)	13 (34%)	17 (45%)	7 (18%)	12 (32%)	1 (3%)	13 (34%)	1
30.	I receive help from my fellow students.	7 (18%)	18 (47%)	25 (66%)	6 (16%)	6 (16%)	0		1

31.	I think there are too many tests given.	2 (5%)	5 (13%)	7 (18%)	15 (39%)	13 (34%)	2 (5%)	15 (39%)	1
32.	I am not used to taking multiple choice tests. I prefer essay exams.	1 (3%)	3 (8%)	4 (11%)	12 (32%)	11 (29%)	10 (26%)	21 (55%)	1
33.	I should only be graded on written work, not on my class participation.	0	8 (21%)		15 (39%)	11 (29%)	3 (8%)	14 (37%)	1
34.	I feel it is rude to ask questions during class.	0	3 (8%)		8 (21%)	20 (53%)	6 (16%)	26 (68%)	1
35.	I am afraid people will think I am stupid if I ask questions in class.	2 (5%)	12 (32%)	14 (37%)	3 (8%)	15 (39%)	5 (13%)	20 (53%)	1
36.	I am afraid my classmates will think I am stupid if I ask them questions.	3 (8%)	5 (13%)	8 (21%)	6 (16%)	17 (45%)	6 (16%)	23 (61%)	1
37.	I ask my professors for help.	7 (18%)	13 (34%)	20 (53%)	10 (26%)	4 (11%)	2 (5%)	6 (16%)	2
38.	I ask my classmates for help.	5 (13%)	19 (50%)	24 (63%)	6 (16%)	6 (16%)	0		2
39.	I ask only international students from my home region for help and support.	5 (13%)	11 (29%)	16 (42%)	3 (8%)	9 (24%)	8 (21%)	17 (45%)	2
40.	I make frequent use of academic support services (tutoring).	5 (13%)	6 (16%)	11 (29%)	9 (24%)	6 (16%)	10 (26%)	16 (42%)	

Part D – OTHER GENERAL NEEDS/COMMENTS

1. What else could the university do to support you academically? See appendix E.

2. Do you have any other comments about your linguistic or educational needs? See appendix E.

Appendix C: Countries of Origin

Kenya	2
Brazil	2
China	2
Israel	1
Japan	5
Korea	6
Mexico	1
Russia	1
Switzerland	1
Taiwan	8
Thailand	5
No data	5

Appendix D: Native Languages

Chinese	10
Haya	1
Hebrew 1	
Japanese	6
Korean	6
Portuguese	2
Russian	1
Spanish	1
Sukuma	1
Swiss	1
Thai	5
Vietnamese	1
No data	2

Appendix E

International Students' Comments

The following comments by international students have been reproduced here without editing, exactly as the students wrote them.

Comments Regarding the Question: "Any other comments about your English language proficiency?"

"Have more chance to communicate with native American."

"Writing well is most difficult."

"I have no problems in reading and understanding but when it comes to write in English and speak up in class, it is difficult."

Comments Regarding the Question: "If you would like to further explain any of your responses from the statements above, please do so here.

"I think DU's most professors are still unaware of the difference between American students & foreign students.

"I think it is unfair that the international student don't really get work study, since it is the only place for us to work. The financial aid office should know that the most of the international students here don't get more than 3000$ a year scholarship only so are basic payers of the school."

"I understand all of study materials because of the dictionary. It's impossible to survive as an international students without it!!! In Japan, we don't have much presentation and discussion compare to here. Therefore, it's hard to speak up in the class, even though I have class in Japan."

"It is tough to speak up in front of the class especially because I am shy. I am afraid to make mistakes and my pronunciation. When it comes to write, I usually take longer than my normal to remember the right words that express what I really want to say on the essays. My essays don't quite express what I want to say."

"It's hard to participate in a discussion in the class, and also I sometimes feel so sorry for other students since I take a time to say even a short comment. I feel like I'm stealing and wasting their time."

Comments from Part D – Other General Needs/Comments:
What else could the university do to support you academically?
Do you have any other comments about your linguistic or educational needs?

"International Student Services at a previous school:

1. Weekly free English conversation class.
2. International student advisors & counselors
3. Weekly "coffee hour" sponsored by the international student group to build supportive environment for the international students and to offer opportunities for other students to meet international students.
4. Conversation partner program.

Dominican:

1. When I entered to school as a graduate student there was no orientation by school for international or graduate students. If there had been any orientation that helped foreign students to understand about differences or difficulties in living and studying in a different culture, that would have made it easier for me to survive.
2. I tried to get some help for my English, and could not find anything.
3. I felt isolated since I didn't have any opportunity to meet other international students who had the same experience or struggles."

"When I came to the United States I used to feel I lived by myself and relationship was not worth much because my first friendship with an American was very bad. I used to think no one understood me, no one cared about me, and I needed to survive the real world by myself. I also used to trust only myself. It is ambiguous but at the same time I also felt strong needs for connection with others. I felt lonely and wanted to be with someone. However, I realized later that at the time, many people encouraged and supported me. I finally realized that I was not alone, even though at the time I felt alone. I learned a lot that they helped me and no one lives without connection with others. The experience helped me to grow. Now I want to help others like they helped me. I experienced the struggle and pain when I moved towards growth. It was very hard to do everything and to be here. I did not know real American culture and made mistakes and got hurt because of the cultural differences. These were so painful and I was afraid to do anything, even though I talked with people first. However, I kept challenging myself again and again, and finally did not feel the pain anymore and was able to expand my experience."

"When professors mention many difficult word. I can't understand what the mean is. I want to remember these words from textbook but I have too many pages I should read. I don't have much time too improve my vocabulary skill (listening and speaking)."

"I hope that we have a assistant whose major is the same with me. If we have any question we can ask the guy!"

"I really hope I can have more time to get long with American because I know I should spend a lot of time to prepare class every day."

"I hope that the university helps us more than now. We don't feel close to the university. We want the university to listen. I hope that we have meeting with our advisors and other school staffs. Or we have a little meeting with other students."

"I hope that I have more opportunities to study English with tutors like communication and pronunciation."

"Let all faculty know about the disadvantage of international students. There is always something that we can't achieve even after we try hard or work hard. They also need to know the advantage of having international students in their classes. They should make much of this opportunity!"

"I have had the best english teacher since I got here. Mrs. Walker is enthusiastic, challenging and more then any thing helpful and friendly. She made me have fun writing, something I hated before."

"There should be a writing lab. A place where foreign students can correct their assignments. Also, Dominican does not have an International Student Club or alliance. Personally, that would be an awesome addition to the Dominican experience. A place where foreign students can connect and get the support they need."

"Help international students with more work. We can not work out side school, and the resources in work study grant are limited. We are coming from places where it is much more cheep to go to school. We spend a lot more on U.S. education. We are willing to work but we can not."

"More and better tutorial service. (Current one is very limited.) Cross cultural training for professors. Free conversation classes for international students. International student coffee hour (socializing)."

"Maybe the professors could leave it optional for international students to talk/speak up in classes with native speakers. I mean, classes with native speakers and international students, the professors could leave it optional for the international students to speak up."

"My English is getting better as time goes by."

"Financial aid should have butget for international students! We also need support and extra money since everythig is very expensive here, and

international students are far from home and need even more money for things. (books, household, T.V., etc.)."

"I'd like to have more tutoring services for any subject. Dominican needs more support for international students, such as state university has."

"I get everything I need from D.U.C."

"I wonder why there is no really foreign language program were you could learn different language, this is more for domestic student but if they would learn a different language it would bring international and domestic students closer together."

"Open extra writting or speaking classes after regular ones. More jounal and magazines in the library for doing paper reference."

"Set up volunteer tutors to correct our papers."

"I think the university should have more student adviser for international students. Sometime my adviser doesn't know anything."

"Listening is a big challenge for international students. I suggest school provide some help regarding this issue."

"Creating more ways of student life."

"Free tutoring. That's the most need for us."

"I need somebody to proofread my paper."

Appendix F

Letter of Introduction to Participants

And Consent to Participate in Anonymous Survey Research

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION TO PARTICIPANTS

AND CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN ANONYMOUS SURVEY RESEARCH

Dear Study Participant:

My name is Lisa Haydon and I am a graduate student in the Division of Education at Dominican University of California. I am also an advisor at Dominican. I am conducting a research project as part of my master's thesis requirements, and Madalienne Peters, Ed.D., Professor of Education at Dominican University of California is supervising this work. I am requesting your voluntary participation in my study, which concerns the academic needs of international students at Dominican University of California.

Participation in this study involves the completion of a written survey, including some demographic questions to be used for statistical purposes. Your survey responses will be completely anonymous. Filling out the survey is likely to take approximately 30 minutes of your time. There will be no costs to you as a result of taking part in this study, nor will you be reimbursed for your participation in this study. Choosing to participate or not participate in this project will not affect your full access to advising or academic support services.

You will not be recorded. All subjects will be identified by numerical code only. The master list for these codes will be kept by this researcher in a locked file, separate from the surveys. Only the researcher and her faculty advisor will see the coded surveys. One year after the completion of the research, all written and recorded material will be destroyed.

Participation in this survey involves no physical risk, but may involve some psychological discomfort, given the nature of the topic being addressed in the survey. You will be discussing topics of a semi-personal nature and you may refuse to answer any question that causes you distress or seems an invasion of your privacy. You may elect to stop the survey at any time.

There will be direct benefit to you from participating in this study. The anticipated benefit of this study is a better understanding of the academic needs of international students by Dominican staff and faculty and therefore, of your own academic needs.

If you have questions about the research you may contact me at (415) 257-1317. If you have further questions you may contact my research supervisor, Dr. Madalienne Peters at (415) 485-3285 or the IRBPHS at Dominican University of California, which is concerned with protection of volunteers in research projects. You may reach the IRBPHS Office by calling (415) 257-0168.

If you choose to participate in this study, please fill out the attached survey as honestly and completely as possible. Remember this survey is completely anonymous; do not put your name or any other identifying information on your survey form.

Participation in research is voluntary. You are free to decline to be in this study, or withdraw from it at any point.

If you would like to know the results of this study once it has been completed, a summary of the results will be posted on the bulletin board outside the Division of Education office, on the second floor of Bertrand Hall after May 1, 2003.

Consent:
I have been given a copy of this consent form to keep.
My signature below indicates that I agree to participate in this study.

_____
Subject's Signature Date of Signature

_____
Signature of Person Obtaining Consent Date of Signature

Lisa Haydon
(415) 257-1317
Dominican University of California
50 Acacia Avenue, San Rafael, CA 94901

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